

## Milan 2008 – Monday 5 May – Thursday 8 May

### Course overview

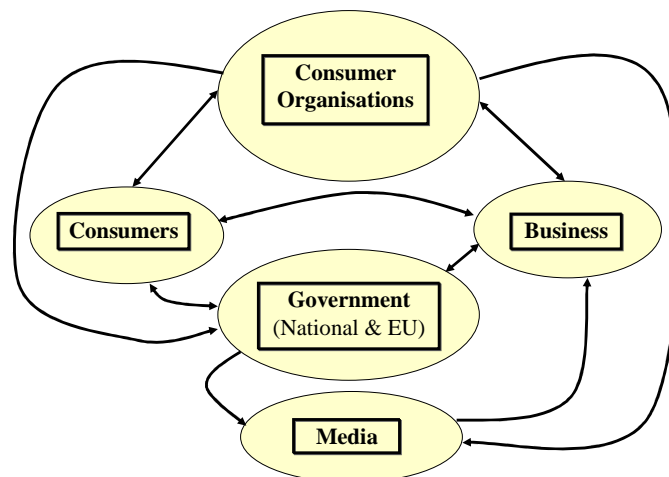
**Title:** Contemporary consumer and business ethics

### Overview

This course explores the impact of ethics on the lives of today's consumer and examines the reaction of companies and other interest groups to these changing views.

The study of ethics has a long and complex history but arguably can be narrowed down to the perception of right and wrong. The Roman philosopher Cicero (106-43BC) stated that *what is morally wrong can never be advantageous, even when it enables you to make some gain that you believe to be to your advantage*. Today we are still faced with these types of decisions although given advancements that have led to globalisation our ability to identify the wrong we are doing through for instance our high levels of consumption, is perhaps less clear.

Taking a consumerist viewpoint this course aims to identify the flows of information that lead to changes resulting from the impact of ethics. Through the use of practical examples the course will examine how different interest groups have both; impacted upon these changes; and how they have reacted to them. The following basic model is used as a basis for the course in identifying the flows of information in contemporary ethics.



Each of these interest groups will be examined in some detail and an analysis of how ethics are changing and how they are likely to change in the future, will be looked at. Some of the topical issues that will be discussed are outlined below in the coursework brief. A timetable including some outline notes for the classes is presented below.

## Course structure

Day/date/ time	Topic	Notes
Monday: 5 May 09.00-11.00	An introduction to contemporary ethics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What is/are ethics</li><li>• What ethical decisions do we make</li><li>• What are the implications of these</li><li>• The actors model</li></ul>
Monday 16.00-19.00	Current consumption and the consumer perspective	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Consumption patterns – national/international</li><li>• High consumption and the implications of this</li></ul>
Tuesday: 6 May 16.00-19.00	Implications and reactions of business	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Rationale for an ethical approach to business</li><li>• Case studies (Body Shop, Walmart)</li></ul>
Thursday: 8 May 09.00-13.00	Government/media/pressure groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Legislation, national/international</li><li>• Media reporting and the influence of the press (a UK perspective)</li><li>• Pressure group activity and their impact</li></ul>
Thursday 16.00-19.00	Linking the actors and conclusions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Presentations</li><li>• Likely future implications</li><li>• Conclusions</li></ul>

## Coursework brief

### *Coursework Aim*

The aim of this coursework is to allow the student to look in depth at a chosen area of study and analyse the issues in terms of ethics. The research can be conducted as a team exercise and the results from this, used by all those students involved.

### *Exercise to be undertaken out with lecture time*

In teams of 5 (approx.), choose one of the areas specified below, undertake secondary research into the topic, analysing why this is a current issue of importance and why it has an ethical dimension. By identifying the pertinent literature evaluate the academic arguments in terms of the ethical implications for consumers and practitioners.

### *Possible topics are:*

- ethical sourcing by companies
- ethical tourism
- animal testing
- fair trade products
- the influence of advertisers on obesity in children
- a subject chosen by the team and agreed by the tutor

Each student will produce an *individual* report and the *team* will do a presentation on their chosen topic on the final day of the course.

## **Selected Bibliography**

### *Books*

- Barry, J. Baxter, B. and Dunphy, R., 2004. *Europe, Globalization and Sustainable Development*, Routledge
- Dunne, P. and Lusch, R., 2007. *Retailing 6e*, Thomson
- Neumayer, E., 2001. *Greening: Trade and Investment; environmental protection without protectionism*, Earthscan Publications
- Thompson, G., 1990. *The political Economy of the New Right*, Pinter Publishers London
- Fine, B., Heasman, M. and Wright, J., 1996. *Consumption in the Age of Affluence*, Routledge
- Gabriel, Y & Lang T. 1995. *The Unmanageable Consumer*, Sage Publications, London

### *Journal Articles*

- Beraho, E.K., 2007. Colonial history and its effects on Sub-Saharan economic development. *Cross Cultural Management. An International Journal*, 14 (3), pp. 254 – 266
- Hurreeram, D.K. and Little, D., 2004. International apparel trade and developing economies in Africa. *International Journal of Social Economics*, 31 (1/2), pp. 131-142
- Kovaks, Rachel 2004. British activism: the viewer and listener community *Corporate Communications: An International Journal* 2004, volume 9, issue: 4 pp: 340 – 362
- Nicholls, Alexander, James, 2002. Strategic options in fair trade retailing, *International Journal of Retail & Distribution Management* 2002, volume 30, number 1, pp: 6 – 17
- Pearce, Richard, Hansson, Maria, 2000. Retailing and risk society: genetically modified food, *International Journal of Retail & Distribution Management* 2002, volume 28, number11, pp: 450 – 459
- Whysall, Paul, 2000, Retailing and the Internet: a review of ethical issues, *International Journal of Retail & Distribution Management* 2000, volume 28, number 11, pp: 481 – 489