Concerned about handling the ethical challenges that are heading your way?

Willing to learn from the failures (and successes) of others?

Wanting to “keep your cool” and bring the best you’ve got to difficult situations?

Curious about better understanding others’ behavior (and your own)?

This spring, two sections of Business Ethics for the 21st Century (2 units) are being offered, to strengthen students’ abilities to anticipate, critically analyze, appropriately respond to, and provide personal and professional leadership regarding, the ethical issues that will arise both specifically during a career in business and generally in life.

Ethical decisions are far more than just “tough choices.” Ethics comes from the Greek root ethos, meaning essential character. When we make ethical decisions, we are, each time, actually re-creating ourselves, our relationships, our own lives, and the world we live-in. At the same time, however, traditional sources of wisdom (elders, families, ethnic traditions, classical religions) are frequently incapable of providing substantial and concrete orientation and guidance in the complex, fast-paced, multi-ethnic, evolving global society where we find ourselves today. Furthermore, modern business practices are changing the way we think, relate, and live and are now even altering fundamental planetary dynamics.

This course is not a simple discussion of some other persons’ ideas of “right” and “wrong.” The course is designed to provide each student with actual tools for greater personal clarity about core values and more confident and effective ability for comprehensive ethical decision-making and action – at work and at home. The course will deeply explore those characteristics of human nature that currently hinder ethical behavior and the realization of maximum human potential, as well highlighting as those characteristics and practices that can, with cultivation, allow all of us to more fully realize our inherent integration, imagination, creative capacity, and fully-satisfying participation in the business of life and the larger Earth adventure.

Topics, which will draw-upon multi-disciplinary revelations from the 20th century in quantum physics, more comprehensive evolutionary understanding, systems theory, depth psychology, etc., and thus allow us to meet the challenges of the 21st century with unprecedented insight, will include:

- Exploring the role of the human enterprise in the overall evolving story of the Universe
- Exploring the development of the human mind, its limitations and its potential
- Exploring aspects of self deeper than personality
- Exploring practices that foster the availability of integrated, whole-being wisdom in approaching critical decisions
- Exploring one’s unique vocation and creative contribution in the Universal scheme of things

No prior background in business, ethics, or philosophy is required. All majors are welcome. For more course information and comments from past students see: http://faculty.haas.berkeley.edu/phillips/

This course satisfies the Letters & Science Philosophy & Values Breadth Requirement.